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Will 2021 be a better year for Vt. economy?

Officials in charge of the state's response to the pandemic offer cautious optimism in Vermont Chamber of Commerce webinar

By Randolph T. Holhut
The Commons

When Gov. Phil Scott declared a state of emergency on March 13, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly every sector of the state's economy was affected.

For many businesses, the restrictions on their operations were painful to their bottom lines. For some, the safety measures proved fatal as shops and inns and restaurants closed and unemployment soared throughout Vermont.

Now, 10 months later, still nervous about the future and concerned about when the pandemic will be brought under control, nearly 400 people sat in on a Jan. 13 webinar hosted by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce featuring the two people who have been the public face of the state's response to the pandemic — Health Commissioner Dr. Mark Levine and Department of Financial Regulation Commissioner Mike Pieciak.

During their 90-minute presentation, Levine and Pieciak outlined the state's pandemic response thus far, and offered cautious optimism about how quickly the state can bounce back economically — particularly as Vermont ramps up its vaccination efforts.

"Public health and economic health can coexist," said Levine. "We don't have to choose one and compromise the other."

'Cooperation, compliance, and prioritization of health'

Despite the economic pain and social turmoil of the early months of the pandemic, the virtual shutdown of parts of the state's economy deemed "non-essential" and the shift to remote working achieved what state officials had hoped for, Levine and Pieciak said.

Hospitals were not swamped with COVID-19 cases, new coronavirus infections were kept to a minimum, and Vermont avoided the worst of the early stages of

the pandemic during the grim weeks of March and April.

But both Levine and Pieciak made it clear that there cannot be a full economic recovery in Vermont, and in the rest of nation, until the virus is suppressed.

Levine said the state has learned a lot about controlling COVID-19 since last March, but thanks to the "cooperation, compliance, and prioritization of health" by Vermonters, the state achieved and continues to achieve the status of being one of the least affected states in terms of cases.

Vermont's public health efforts were among the most successful in the country. As a result, by May, restrictions were gradually lifted, out-of-state travel was allowed, and there were signs that the state's all-important tourism and hospitality industry would recover in time for the winter season.

But just as things were getting closer to normal in the fall, a renewed and more virulent phase of the pandemic struck in November.

The number of new cases and deaths rapidly increased to close out 2020. Travel restrictions were reimposed, as were limits on gatherings in public places.

The long slog

The watch phrase in those early days of the pandemic was "flattening the curve," referring to the graph that predicted the capacity of the pandemic to overwhelm the capacity of the health care system. If Vermonters would stay home as much as possible, the rate of infection would be

■ SEE COVID-19, A2



A view of the Vermont Yankee site from a new landscape inventory report, a collaboration among Antioch University New England, NorthStar, the town of Vernon, and Rich Holschuh, an indigenous cultural researcher.

Land inventory report points toward multiple scenarios following the decommissioning of the nuclear power plant

By Olga Peters
The Commons

VERNON—A new land inventory report offers a series of possibilities for the Vermont Yankee site to eventually be used for industry, recreation, preserving habitat, and recognizing the Abenaki relationship to the banks of the Connecticut River, past and present.

The report is a collaboration between Antioch University New England, NorthStar, the town of Vernon, and Rich Holschuh, representing the Elnu Abenaki tribe. It exists in a hard copy and an online interactive version.

The nuclear plant started operating in 1972 and for decades served as the primary industry in Vernon.

Since VY's former owner, Entergy, announced in 2013 that it would close the boiling water nuclear reactor, the town has

sought to identify businesses to replace the plant at the 125-acre property. The Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO) switchyard as well as railroad spurs which remain on the site.

That ambition is a novel idea in the world of decommissioned nuclear sites, at least in New England.

"This project is an innovative model of collaboration for site restoration planning that will support redevelopment efforts at the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant site once the decommissioning process is completed," states the report. "Overall, lessons learned will be instrumental in guiding best practices moving forward for subsequent site decommissioning(s) and arrangements for restoration and redevelopment."

The report contains a history of the nuclear plant and its impact on Vernon's economy. It also catalogues the site's

geological and cultural features, including soil types, hydrology, plant and animal species, and built infrastructure, and it includes an archaeological sensitivity index, which "indicates areas that are likely to be sensitive and, therefore, should be evaluated for significant archaeological importance prior to development."

Reuse scenarios suggested in the report incorporate the fact that the former plant's spent fuel will remain on site — at least until the U.S. Department of Energy establishes an alternative storage facility.

Until then, the spent fuel is stored in casks onsite in the Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI).

According to the report, commercial and industrial investors will find the property attractive given its waterfront location and access to major highways and the site's existing infrastructure. "The future redevelopment

will coexist with these ISFSI and the town of Vernon will ensure the safety and management of this area," the report states.

The report offers three scenarios for the site's future. All three visualize continued industrial use, along with land reserved for recreation (like bike trails) and natural habitat such as wetlands.

All three scenarios recognize the Abenaki people's past and current use of the site.

The main question: How much of the property and which parts of it would be allocated for each use?

NorthStar, the site's current owner, is on track to finish its decommissioning work by 2026, years ahead of its original 2030 estimate, according to an email from Scott State, CEO and Chief Nuclear Officer for VY Decommissioning.

The new report will not impact NorthStar's

■ SEE VY REPORT, A3

For ski towns, a plan to boost summer economy



JEFF POTTER, COMMONS FILE PHOTO

The hills of Mount Snow, bare of skiers on a sunny fall day. The Deerfield Valley is looking at a five-year marketing plan to attract visitors during the summer months to improve the region's year-round economic health.

Dover and Wilmington Selectboards receive consultants' five-year marketing plan as towns look to re-establish the Deerfield Valley's foothold as a spring and summer vacation destination

By Olga Peters
The Commons

A consultant from a Virginia-based marketing and advertising firm has presented a new branding strategy for the Deerfield Valley region — "the Foothold of the Green Mountains" — as part of a five-year strategic marketing plan.

"A foothold suggests that it's a secure position from which progress can be made," Julie Garel, chief curiosity officer with Charrette Agency, told members of the Dover and Wilmington Selectboards as the firm recommended the tagline at least as a

"placeholder."

"It is, in fact, your geography — you are the first important point for visitors when they're driving to Vermont," she added. "It's a geographic advantage, a competitive advantage; you're closer to get to than most of your competitors."

Garel said the proposed tagline — if adopted by the committee and ultimately the Selectboards of both towns — combines a sense of serenity and balance with the cachet associated with the words "Vermont" and "Green Mountains" already carry with many of the people with whom consultants with the firm spoke.

■ SEE MARKETING PLAN, A3

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We especially invite responses to material that appears in the paper.

We do not publish unsigned or anonymous letters, and we only very rarely withhold names for other pieces. When space is an issue, our priority is to run contributions that have not yet appeared in other publications.

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In memoriam:
Alan O. Dann

Next in line for vaccine: Vermonters age 75 and older
Registration will begin Jan. 25; vaccines to start Jan. 27

MONTPELIER— State officials announced on Jan. 15 that the next phase of COVID-19 vaccine distribution, for Vermonters 75 and older, will begin on Monday, Jan. 25. Agency of Human Services Commissioner Mike Smith said online registration for the estimated 50,000 Vermonters in that age group will begin on that date, with clinics scheduled to begin on Wednesday, Jan. 27. Clinics will be run by the state as well as by pharmacies and hospitals. Details on how to register will be made available later this week. Smith said Vermonters should not call or email their local health clinics or hospitals to seek an appointment. “By waiting until we have more

details to share, you’ll be helping our staff focus on the difficult and complex work to prepare for this next phase,” said Health Commissioner Dr. Mark Levine. Smith said that the second dose of the vaccine will be scheduled for the same time and in the same place as the first one is administered. He stressed the importance of keeping the appointments so vaccines will not be wasted. Smith and Levine both said the 75-and-older phase should take about six weeks, although it might happen faster if the state gets more vaccine. Right now, Smith said, Vermont is getting around 8,800 doses per week, but the federal government’s reserve stockpile of vaccines is nearly depleted. “What we really need is greater quantities of vaccine in the weeks

ahead so that we can speed up our efforts,” Smith said. “But we want to set appropriate expectations and communicate clearly where we are and what we expect, to avoid the frustration and disappointment we’ve seen in other states.” Levine said that “now that Vermonters know more about our plans, we are anticipating plenty of interest and questions. This will be good news for many people, but I again need to ask for your patience and help as we finalize our systems so they can be rolled out as smoothly as possible.” He also emphasized the state’s commitment to addressing the factors, historical and current, that contribute to health disparities, particularly among Vermonters of color.

“There is no question that members of certain demographic groups have been disproportionately overrepresented in Vermont’s COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death rates,” he said. “This means we must prioritize these groups to reach our goal of preserving life and protecting those most at risk.” “We have been working with community leaders, we have listened, and we are committed to continuing to right past wrongs,” he continued. “We will ensure that this community gets the support they need, in the language they need, [and] in the locations they need, to make informed choices and to get scheduled for vaccinations.” The next group to get the vaccine will be those 70 and older, then those age 65 and older.

At that point, people ages 18 to 65 who have chronic conditions will then join the line. Levine said those conditions include cancer, kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a variety of heart conditions, weakened immune systems, severe obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and sickle cell disease. Those with Down syndrome and who are pregnant are also eligible. Smith said that, as of Jan. 15, 35,000 doses have been administered, and the state expects that everyone in the first group to be vaccinated — health care providers, emergency medical services personnel, and long-term care facility residents — will have been vaccinated by the end of this month.

COVID-19

lowered. They did. Once that was achieved, Levine said, the state came out of the closures and restrictions “in a phased and gradual way, using public health and science” as a guide. “We asked people to do incredible things in a short period of time,” Levine said, citing the widespread acceptance of wearing face masks and social distancing, which he said had a huge impact on reducing the number of COVID-19 cases in Vermont. Now, as more is known about how the virus is spread, Levine said the state can contain outbreaks without resorting to the near-total shutdown of daily activities that Vermont went through last spring. He said the state has a good testing system now, so that those infected can be isolated and anyone they came in contact with can be found and quarantined. But even that system is not infallible, since Levine said as many as 40 percent of new infections are spread by people who have no symptoms of the virus.

Older people next to get the vaccine
Levine also cautioned that the vaccination of Vermonters will

take time due to shortages of the vaccine. The focus for the next couple of months will be on making sure people over age 65 get inoculated, since data show that they are the most likely to get seriously ill and die from the virus. “It’s going to take months and months to get the vaccine out to a large amount of the population, so everyone, including those who get vaccinated, will need to continue wearing a mask and distancing and avoiding crowds,” he said. “There’s no way around it, because we don’t yet know if the vaccine will prevent you from transmitting the virus.” The goal, he said, is to reduce the number of new cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, while keeping schools open and supporting a return to a pre-pandemic economy. Levine said every infection that is prevented “is a step toward health and economic recovery.” If the state’s efforts succeed in suppressing virtual growth, life might start returning to normal by late spring or early summer. But Levine said the many things that Vermonters have become accustomed to, such as working from home and meeting via videoconference, will likely

need to continue for months to come. Pandemics are bad for business
Peciak, who has led the data team tracking the pandemic since last March, said that pandemics “are bad for the economy, regardless what the public health response is,” but Vermont’s response has set up the state for a faster recovery. He shared historical data from the 1918-19 flu pandemic that showed most of the U.S. cities who were aggressive in their public health response recovered from the economic effects of the pandemic more quickly than cities that were lax or tardy in their response. He praised the Vermont business community for its cooperation over the past 10 months, behavior that he said has not always been the case elsewhere in the nation. “The last year has been extraordinarily challenging,” Peciak said, adding that not everyone was happy with “the shifting guidance and restrictions on your businesses,” and that “sometimes [there was] not always understanding or

appreciating why the restrictions or policies were put in place.” But Peciak said the support of the business community “really helped us” to effectively respond to the pandemic. Aside from grocery stores, Peciak said, every sector of the Vermont economy was hurt by the pandemic, with education, health care, and leisure and hospitality being the three top sectors affected. The state’s gross domestic product (GDP) declined 38.1 percent in the second quarter of 2020 before recovering to rise 47.9 percent in the third quarter of the year. The final quarter numbers are still being compiled, Peciak said, but 2020 will likely end with a lower overall GDP for Vermont than in 2019. He said the state is well-positioned to recover, but there are trouble spots. While total consumer spending in Vermont declined by only 0.5 percent for the first 11 months of 2020, spending on restaurants and hotels declined 44.8 percent and spending on entertainment and recreation declined 87.1 percent. Economic inequality is also a factor, as Peciak pointed out that

in 2020, while the S&P 500 stock index showed an 18 percent gain, demand at Vermont food shelves rose by more than 60 percent. That disparity is reflected in the unemployment rates. While those who earn more than \$500,000 annually saw a 0.8-percent decline in employment through the first three quarters of 2020, middle wage earners (\$27,000–\$60,000) saw an 11.6-percent decline, and low-wage earners (less than \$27,000) saw a 37.5-percent decline. By industry, Peciak said that the leisure and hospitality sector saw a 31.2-percent drop in employment, compared to a 12.3-percent decline for retail and transportation and a 4.9-percent decline in professional and business services.

Reasons for optimism
Both Levine and Peciak agreed that the future health and economy recovery for Vermont hinges on how many Vermonters get vaccinated for COVID-19. “It is critical to get the vaccine out to as many people as we can as quickly as we can,” said Peciak. But they cite other reasons to be optimistic about the ultimate recovery of Vermont’s economy in 2021.

Peciak said the initial burst of federal stimulus money brought \$1.2 billion of aid and “propped up and sustained our economy through the most challenging point of the pandemic.” The stimulus also accounted for an increase in bank deposits in Vermont. Peciak said the amount of money saved rose 22 percent, from \$8.4 billion on Dec. 31, 2019 to \$10.3 billion as of Sept. 30, 2020. “That tells us there’s quite a bit of money to be spent by Vermonters, or lent out by our financial institutions once the pandemic is over,” he said. A pent-up demand for travel will likely lead to a big influx of visitors once it is safe to allow out-of-staters back into Vermont. More people moved into Vermont in 2020, and Peciak believes that, if the newcomers decide to stick around, they will help diversify and strengthen the state’s economy. But the only thing that is really certain for 2021 is more uncertainty, said Levine. “Lots of things will evolve in the coming months,” he said, adding that once the winter months are over and people can get back outside again, the state’s travel policies, as well as restrictions on bars and restaurants, may be loosened to where they were in August and September. Until then, “masks on faces, 6-foot spaces, and uncrowded spaces,” reminded Levine. And wash your hands, too, the doctor said.

The complete webinar can be viewed at bit.ly/596-covid-chamber.

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■ VY report

decommissioning process, which is governed by state and federal regulations. NorthStar, however, has been vocal about collaborating with Vernon to ensure a successful transition back to town ownership. The company will continue to support the process through funding and by providing technical support, wrote State.

“As part of our commitment to good corporate citizenship in the communities where we work, NorthStar is pleased to collaborate with the town of Vernon and Antioch University to advance this innovative model for site restoration planning,” wrote State, who called the report “the first tangible product of this iterative planning process.”

All part of the plan

In 2018, the town added a section to its Town Plan focusing on post-VY resiliency. The text makes it clear that the town wants the business on the site, said Martin Langeveld, clerk of the Planning Commission.

On the surface, Vernon appears to be a rural community, “but it’s been in the energy business since 1912, when the Vernon dam was built and then, in the 1960s, when they got started with Vermont Yankee,” he said.

The sites of VY’s sister plants — Yankee Rowe and Maine Yankee — have not been put back into commercial use.

“Of the former nuclear plant sites that have been fully decommissioned in the U.S., none of them have been industrially re-developed,” he added.

■ Marketing plan

The goal of the marketing plan, estimated to cost the towns \$1,111,650 over five years, is to develop the valley’s identity and keep the story attached to that identity — or brand — at the front of travelers’ minds as an April-through-August destination, consultants said during the online meeting.

The spring and summer months comprise what is traditionally the valley’s slower tourist season, compared to the winter months when the area’s ski economy kicks into overdrive.

State meals and rooms taxes from both towns in 2019 — pre-pandemic — show an almost 40-percent decline in such economic activity between January through March and July through September.

In comparison, hospitality tax receipts in the summer months for all of Windham County declined by 20 percent when comparing the same three-month blocks of time — and, when both Dover and Wilmington are removed, the other Windham County towns’ tourist economies differed by 15 percent.

Good marketing will also hook people earlier in the vacation-planning process, consultants told the board members during the joint meeting to hear Charrette’s presentation on Jan. 12.

According to Gretchen Havreluk, Wilmington economic development consultant, the strategic plan is a priority for the marketing effort of the two communities’ Bi-Town Economic Development Committee.

Dover and Wilmington formed the committee approximately a decade ago as a way for the two towns to pool their resources.

Last June, the two boards approved a \$71,500 work plan — each town contributing equally — that included \$25,000 to hire a consultant. In the fall, the towns chose Charrette from 11 firms who responded to a request for proposals.

Soon, the committee will release another RFP, this one for creating videos and photographs to showcase the area in the summer.

Havreluk noted that last summer, the committee had spent the \$30,250 approved in the work plan for digital marketing.

A rebranding process, which will include new street banners, has already been on the committee’s work plan as part of the overall strategy, she said.

Who’s coming to visit?

Charrette’s own branding bills the company as “a marketing forum,” and its website describes the firm’s process as rooted in the planning process for which it is named.

Its marketing materials define a design charrette as “an intensive, communications planning approach wherein citizens, designers and stakeholders collaborate on a vision for the development of a project, providing a forum for ideas, inspiration, debate, and ultimately, consensus.”

As part of its research, Charrette staff conducted interviews and compared the valley’s marketing materials — like

FROM SECTION FRONT

The inventory report, funded by NorthStar, helps the town understand what lies under the surface of the VY site. Knowing the types of soils, how water flows, and the property’s general geography will inform the future use and the types of businesses that might locate on the site, he said.

The report represents the outcome of phase one of the Planning Commission’s work.

Phase two will include an expanded online version of the report that will allow users to view the information on a deeper level — for example, to create visual renderings of each layer of the ground.

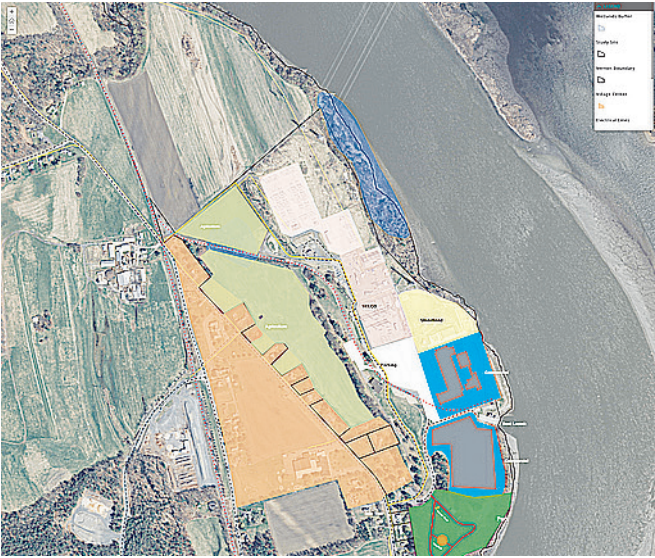
A Vermont Municipal Planning Grant awarded last year by the state Agency of Commerce and Community Development will fund phase two, which also includes hiring a consultant to design potential plans that could attract businesses.

Langeveld said that the Planning Commission has drafted a request for proposals for final approval by the Selectboard regarding this next phase. If approved, the commission anticipates the consultant to complete work by Aug. 31.

Reconnecting to Native heritage

Rich Holschuh contributed to a section in the report detailing the human and cultural heritage at the VY site. He also wrote the indigenous land acknowledgement included in the report.

Holschuh said that the local Abenaki have gathered, fished,



The new report sets forth three scenarios for using the Vermont Yankee site as a place for continued industry, recreation, wildlife preservation, and public recognition for Abenaki people, past and present.

and planted crops at the Great Bend area of the Connecticut River for centuries. Burial sites found in the area attest to its heritage.

Across the river, in Hinsdale, N.H., an archeological site dates back to King Philip’s War, which took place from 1675 to 1678, he said. Mary Rowlandson makes note of the area in her book, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, written in 1682.

For Holschuh, however, the significance of the Great Bend, and the Elnu Abenaki’s relationship to it, is not only about the past. The Elnu are still among us. Their relationship to the land still exists here. It still exists now.

“I want to make this real with [Vernon and its visitors], and have them incorporate that into their story of themselves,” he said. “Rather than it just be, you know, tales of attack by vengeful savages.”

As Holschuh notes, several generations of new immigrants are recognized on the VY site and in Vernon, such as in names like Governor Hunt House. Yet, the people who inhabited this land for thousands of years prior to that colonization too often remain invisible.

How the future redevelopment of the VY site will acknowledge the Abenaki remains to be determined. One suggestion in the land inventory report is to construct an interpretive kiosk on the site.

Holschuh is hoping for an acknowledgement that is “more holistic and alive than that” and recognizes how subsequent generations have benefitted from the land and the Abenaki.

“Something in terms of an actual piece of land where a benefit culture can be understood in place and engaged with,” he added. “And I don’t know what that would look like because this is probably years out.”

During the state-level discussions before the Vermont Public Utility Commission (PUC) that oversaw Entergy’s sale to NorthStar, Holschuh joined the process as an intervener on behalf of the Abenaki.

“I felt that it was important given the location of the plant itself at the Great Bend that there be some sort of representation for Indigenous voice there, and to speak for the land and for what is in the land,” he said.

During the PUC process, Holschuh requested that a cultural resource survey be conducted on the site.

This type of survey — to investigate, acknowledge, and preserve sensitive cultural history — never happened prior to the plant’s construction in the 1960s, Holschuh said. The National Historic Preservation Act, a statute requiring such archeological investigation was established several years before construction started on VY. But “it was not being implemented, because it was so new. Nobody knew what to do with it and how to go about it. So, when VY was being built, nobody ever looked to see what was there,” he explained.

“And so, the reality is that there was probably a great deal of destruction that took place,” Holschuh continued. “But I wanted it on the record that that was the case. And that it be acknowledged that there was that that was an error of omission.”

Holschuh said he asked NorthStar to assess the site and assign a sensitivity index to inform future redevelopment.

The Antioch report contains such an index, which ranks areas of cultural interest or the existence of historic significance as high, medium, and low sensitivity. According to the report’s map, an area of high sensitivity follows the river bank, as does a larger area west of the plant’s built infrastructure.

Next, Holschuh asked that NorthStar hire a consultant to train employees what signs to look for when working on the VY site. So far, he said he has not heard of any cultural finds.

NorthStar has also offered to add an acknowledgement of the Abenaki’s relationship to the land that houses the plant to a sign at the front gate of the property, he said.

Holschuh said he views the land inventory report as opening a door between the Elnu and the town of Vernon. He hopes it can mark the start of an ongoing relationship.

“Vermont Yankees come and Vermont Yankees go — over a period of 50 years — and nuclear waste doesn’t go anywhere, yes, but the town of Vernon is there and has been there for a while,” he said. “So I want the town of

Vernon to be equally aware, if not more so, of where they are situated.”

Next phases

Going forward, the report recommends the continued gathering of information that should augment the report’s maps and help inform future redevelopment. It should also detail the decommissioning process in order to build a case study that can inform best practices for future decommissioning projects.

Community feedback should also be gathered to help update the town’s future development plans.

Langeveld stressed that the town has kept moving forward since the plant stopped generating power in 2014. The community has received a state village center designation, it has updated its walking trails, the Governor Hunt House — formerly part of the VY site — is being transitioned into a community center, he said.

Vernon has created a protocol for how to handle inquiries about the site. Langeveld said a few have already come in, and staff members are putting what they learn into a database, he said. Nothing is certain in this information-gathering phase.

“We’d rather have somebody lined up within the next few years that says yes, when NorthStar is ready to hand over the keys,” Langeveld said.

He added that the town is also applying for a federal Economic Development Administration grant as part of the Nuclear Closure Communities Fund in order to develop detailed site maps and potential use designs that would serve to market and attract new industry.

Despite NorthStar’s completion date of 2026, Langeveld said it’s never too early to start searching for Vernon’s future.

“Whatever’s next, it might be related to energy, it might not be,” Langeveld said. “But whatever’s next, the town wants to continue to see that site used for industrial purposes.”

To view the report, visit bit.ly/596-vy-reuse.

the Bi-Town Committee needs to complete three steps, Garell told the boards, whose members mostly listened to the consultants, breaking in only to ask clarifying questions.

First, because the plan calls for too many tasks for a staff member, volunteer, or board member to tackle in their spare time, she said that a dedicated staff person will need to oversee the plan’s implementation.

Next, this staff person must shepherd the valley’s campaign, she said. Its important that all the marketing images, tone, and communication be constant and high-quality.

Finally, the marketing plan needs funding, Garell said. If the Dover and Wilmington boards adopt the five-year plan, they could expect to spend \$161,000 in the first year.

By year five, the annual cost would rise to \$273,610, with a presumption that a successful regional marketing campaign will consume more resources for future growth.

To achieve most of what Charrette suggested will require multiple updates to the valley’s current marketing tools — for example, a website redesign, the addition of more videos and photographs, establishing an active social-media presence, and more positive coverage from national media outlets.

Eventually, the consultants suggested, the valley would also benefit from a more-integrated events and weddings platform.

The consultants said that outreach materials should highlight everyone in the valley who is able to work on such events. For weddings, such a promotion would cover every need, including caterers, planners, officiants, and venues.

It should also be simple to book everyone from one website, they added.

Rich Santos, senior vice president for digital at Media Works, Ltd., which collaborates with Charrette, walked the board members through the recommended media plan.

His suggestions included creating an active social media campaign on established sites such as Facebook and Instagram. But he also suggested that the valley promote itself through influencers — users of such platforms who have attracted huge followings and who can be paid to promote a product, service or, in this case, a region to visit.

‘It’s all fluid’

Charrette explained that year one would serve as a planning year. Most staff time would focus on establishing the infrastructure in order to fully launch the marketing initiatives in year two.

Given the ongoing pandemic and its impact on the hospitality

industry, a year to establish infrastructure and to plan rather than actively recruit travelers might work in the valley’s favor, she said.

Garell added that Charrette didn’t expect the committee and the two towns to tackle all the recommendations at once.

“It’s all fluid,” she said.

The Bi-Town Committee will follow up Charrette’s presentation with recommendations to both Selectboards in late February or early March, Havreluck said.

In the meantime, she added, the committee is working on a blogging policy and content list.

“If anyone is interested in blogging, we’d love to talk with

them,” she said.

To watch video of the presentation, visit bit.ly/596-foothold. Anyone interested in writing a blog post should contact Ethan Schoonmaker at the Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley Chamber of Commerce at execdir@visitvermont.com or 802-464-8092.

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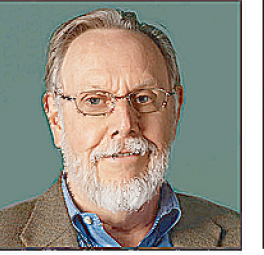
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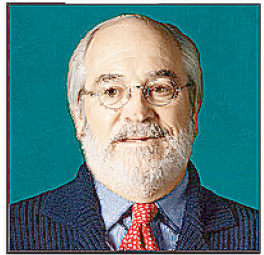
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*Based on 2020 NEREN data

Bullock joins women’s chorus for 25th anniversary virtual sing

BRATTLEBORO—This 2020-21 year, the Brattleboro Women’s Chorus celebrates 25 years of singing, with online musical events on the 25th day of each month through May.

All singers (not just women!) are welcome to join in for these events, which will be hosted on Zoom.

On Monday, Jan. 25, from 7 to 8:15 p.m., director Becky Graber welcomes one of her Women Sing 100 colleagues, Dr. Kathy Bullock, to lead the chorus in song.

Bullock will lead everyone in singing several songs from the African American tradition and will share some historical context. “Together, all will celebrate the joy and power of song, community, and love,” the organization says in a news release.

Bullock is a music professor, singer/arranger, and workshop clinician who specializes in gospel music, spirituals, and classical works by composers from the African diaspora.

For more information and to register, visit bit.ly/596-bullock.



Kathy Bullock

Brattleboro Concert Choir launches spring season — virtually

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Concert Choir invites new and returning singers to take part in its spring 2021 virtual season as its Stay-at-Home Sing-Along series continues. The group also is offering virtual performances of choral works.

Music Director Jonathan Harvey and the choir are committed to building and maintaining a musical community. “Especially now, music is an essential source of joy, solace, solidarity, and hope,” Harvey said in a news release.

This spring, the choir will offer monthly virtual performances of works by women composers, where individual voices will be combined digitally into a multi-part harmony.

Also, singers are invited to join the choir’s virtual musical community beginning in February. The monthly Stay-At-Home Sing-Along will allow participants, via the video and audio conferencing platform Zoom, to sing together to great works from the choral-orchestral repertoire.

Harvey explains that participants logging into each Sing-Along session will warm up together, talk about the music and its context, and when they sing, the music will be projected on participants’ computer screens as the group sings along to great recordings.

Singers will also receive digital sheet music, practice resources, and program notes in advance.

Each virtual performance will be preceded by online rehearsals, also held on Zoom, during which Harvey will teach and shape the piece, preparing singers to record and submit their own individual virtual performance contributions.

The \$70 registration fee for the spring virtual season includes digital sheet music and practice materials for all pieces. For more information, contact the Brattleboro Music Center at info@bmcvt.org, visit the program page (which includes a full schedule of Sing-Along offerings and registration link) at bmcvt.org/brattleboro-concert-choir/sing-along, or call 802-257-4523.



Emmet Cohen Trio

A young jazz musician reaches for the stars



Mark Whitfield

Vermont Jazz Center presents Emmett Cohen Trio, with guest artist Mark Whitfield on Jan. 23

BRATTLEBORO—The Vermont Jazz Center is excited to present Cole Porter Fellow and pianist Emmet Cohen, who will be performing live from the VJC in his working trio, with Russell Hall (acoustic bass) and Kyle Poole (drums). The trio will be joined by a special guest, guitar legend Mark Whitfield.

Cohen’s list of awards and accomplishments is impressive, but these days he’s attracting a particularly high level of attention due to his weekly livestream Facebook concerts. As of this writing, he has produced 36 episodes with A-list jazzers, including Cyrille Aimée, Warren Wolf, Veronica Swift, and Whitfield.

These Monday-night Facebook sessions at Cohen’s Harlem apartment give audiences the feel of a late-night New York club. Cohen says the intimate gatherings, imbued with the camaraderie one experiences where many of the patrons are “regulars,” now garner approximately 1,000 viewers per week.

Cohen’s technique is breathtaking,

EUGENE UMAN is director of the Vermont Jazz Center. Admission to this livestream concert on Saturday, Jan. 23, at 8 p.m. is free, but donations are welcome. The concert will be one 70-minute live set followed by a short interview. In accordance with state-issued safety concerns, there will be no in-house audience. Visit vtjazz.org and facebook.com/VermontJazzCenter/live to participate and to donate.

his swing feeling is buoyant, and his interactions among his musical cohorts are telepathic. He has been the pianist in bassist Christian McBride’s Tip City Trio project. McBride calls Emmet “one of the most dynamic young musicians on the scene today.”

Jeff Potter of *DownBeat* magazine states: “Cohen’s playing springs from tradition. Favoring swinging phrasing and concise melodic arcs colored by rich harmonic vocabulary, the tasteful pianist never lets his nimble, cleanly articulated technique overflow into clutter. His music’s uplifting attitude is frequently colored with wit.” [Editor’s note: This reviewer is not the same Jeff Potter who edits this newspaper.]

Cohen is the winner of the 2019

American Pianists Awards; he was chosen as this year’s Cole Porter Fellow by the American Pianists Association and placed first in both the 2014 American Jazz Pianists Competition and the 2011 Phillips Piano Competition. He was also a finalist in the 2011 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz International Piano Competition.

He has appeared at jazz festivals throughout the world, including Newport, Monterey, Detroit, North Sea, Bern, Edinburgh, Jerusalem, and New Orleans. He has performed at the Village Vanguard, the Blue Note, Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola, Birdland, Jazz Standard, London’s Ronnie Scott’s, Jazzhus Montmartre, Lincoln Center’s

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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

College news

• Several local students were honored by Castleton University for academic excellence in the fall 2020 semester. Named to the President's List were **Greer Bills** of Wardsboro, **Saima Cassell** of Westminster, **Abby Chapman** of Brattleboro, **Maureen Hughes** of Westminster, **Maria Page** of West Halifax, **Jonah Siegel** of Brattleboro, and **Veronica Stevens** of Newfane. Named to the Dean's List were **Cody Cutler** of Newfane, **Taylor Goodell** of Westminster, **Rebekah Lazarek** of Westminster, **Valentina MacEachern** of Vernon, **Devin Millerick** of Vernon, **Scarlett Pugliese** of South Londonderry, **Kelsey Rabideau** of Dummerston, **Jessica Roberts** of Putney, and **Laura Vogell** of Springfield.

• **Tyler Godin** of Vernon and **Thomas Carroll** of Vernon were named to the fall 2020 Dean's List at Curry College in Milton, Mass.

• **Kim Amidon**, an environmental studies major from Vernon, was recently named to the President's List for the fall 2020 semester at the State University of New York at Potsdam.

• The following local students were named to the Dean's List for the fall 2020 semester at the University of New England in Biddeford, Maine: **Mollie Patenaude** and **Riley Patenaude** of Brattleboro, **Olivia Lauricella** of Saxtons River, and **Emma Krzeminski** of Whitingham.

• **Caya Greenspan-Layman** of Wilmington was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2020 semester at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pa.

• **Marissa Betit** of Vernon has been named to Southern New Hampshire University's fall 2020 President's List.

Obituaries

• **Alexander "Buddy" DiSilva, 83**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully on Jan. 1, 2021. He was born March 20, 1937 to Vincent and Gladys DiSilva. Mr. DiSilva, formally of Lexington Mass., was a graduate of St. Mary's High School in Waltham, Mass., and was a 1958 graduate of St. Anselm's College. He worked for many years at his father's trucking company, DiSilva Transportation in Somerville, Mass.. Buddy worked with many relatives and good friends while driving a truck for DiSilva Transportation, and later took over the family trucking operations in Brattleboro — Brattleboro Haulage and Webster Trucking. He retired many years ago in Brattleboro, so he could stay close to and spend time with his children and grandchildren. Buddy was a great hockey coach and passed his skills on to his children. He loved his family, and loved to tell stories to his younger relatives about his childhood and growing up with his four sisters in Waltham, his "war stories" from his days of driving a truck, and his

tales of the family business, including him and his cousin Albert unloading freight cars and unloading watermelons in the company yard. Buddy is survived by five children, Michael and Theresa of Wake Forest N.C., Gregory and Heidi of Brattleboro, Mike and Nancy and Brian of Brattleboro. He is also survived by eight grandchildren. He was predeceased by two sisters, Madelyn and Delores, and survived by two sisters, Marie and Bob Stocki of Waltham, and JoAnne and Bill Vrettas of Falmouth, Mass. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: He had asked to be cremated and his ashes placed with his mother, Gladys, in the family plot in Lexington Cemetery. The family will not be holding any services at this time. They ask that all hold their fondest memories of Buddy in their hearts and remember all the good and smiles he spread in this world.

• **Myron R. "Bob" Ingalls Jr., 83**, of West Chesterfield, N.H. Died Jan. 12, 2021 at Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, N.H., after a brief period of failing health. He was born on Jan. 31, 1937 in Chesterfield, the son of Myron R. Ingalls Sr. and Hazel E. (Aldrich) Ingalls. He was the proud husband of the late Doris M. (Dills) Ingalls. They were married in 1959. Bob graduated from Brattleboro Union High School in 1955, while also working at R.S. Roberts. From there, he worked as a journeyman electrician and appliance repairman at Dompier Electric, then at Bailey's Appliance. Bob eventually retired but still needed to work to stay busy. He worked at Chick's Automotive Electrical Service, and later Gordon's Auto Repair. He was also a long-term member at the Pioneer Baptist church in West Chesterfield. Bob was an excellent craftsman and furniture maker and loved to work on vehicles. He also enjoyed taking trips to Maine with his sisters. Bob was predeceased by his sisters Frances Lougee and Debbie Wauftluft. He is survived by his son David W. Ingalls and his wife, Jane, of Brattleboro; sisters Nancy Evans and her husband, Harry, of Guilford, Helen Hebert of Payson, Ariz., and Bette Page and her husband Chip of Swanze, N.H.; sister-in-law Phyllis D. Banner and her husband Raymond; and two grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Bob will be laid to rest in the spring next to his beloved wife at Chesterfield West Cemetery. To leave a message of condolence, visit phaneuf.net.

• **Paul S. Martocci Sr., 70**, of Brookline. Died unexpectedly at home on Jan. 11, 2021, following a period of declining health. Paul was born in Brattleboro on Sept. 27, 1950, the son of Nicholas and Corinne June (Harris) Martocci. He was raised and educated in Brattleboro, attending St. Michael's School. For 15 years, Paul was the custodian at Academy School in West Brattleboro. He was well respected and loved by many of the students during his time at Academy. Previously, he poured concrete for B&B Forms of Dover. Paul was a

lifelong communicant of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church in Brattleboro. He enjoyed his "gentleman's farm," animals, puttering around his home and riding his motorcycle. In 1970, he married to Rosalee Randall, who survives. Besides his faithful and devoted wife of more than 50 years, he leaves two sons, Matthew Martocci and his wife, Karen, of Townshend, and Paul Martocci of Brookline; two brothers, Nicholas Martocci of Brookline and Mario Martocci of Seymour, Tenn.; two grandchildren, Paul J. Martocci and Alisha Martocci, and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by four siblings, Frank and Phillip Martocci, and Jill and JoAnne Martocci. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: In keeping with his final wishes, there will be no formal funeral services. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society, PO Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To send messages of condolence to the family, visit atamaniuk.com.

• **Marjorie "Mimi" Morton, 74**, of Guilford. Died at home on Jan. 10, 2021 of pancreatic cancer, in the presence of her husband, Rick Zamore, her daughter Kathryn Jezer Morton, and her stepdaughter, Leah Zamore. She was born on Feb. 9, 1946 in Riverton, N.J. She was named "Mimi" by her twin brother, John, when he was learning to talk. John and his wife, Pat, had a last visit with Mimi two days before she died. Growing up in Riverton, on the Delaware River, she learned to sail with her brother, acquired her phenomenal cooking and housekeeping skills from her mother, Helen (Landers) Morton, and developed a life-long passion for gardening at the side of her father, John Morton. Educated in the local public schools, she originally came to Vermont to attend the University of Vermont, graduating Phi Beta Kappa with a B.A. in Literature in 1968. A junior year abroad in Scotland incited her love of travel. She received an M.A. from the University of Chicago and taught for a year at Central Illinois College, an experience she described as "spooky" in the era before the Women's Movement. She then earned a Ph.D with distinction from McGill University in Montreal, where she settled. She taught English and humanities for nearly 30 years at Dawson College in Montreal, where she helped found the women's studies program. During this period, she began writing fiction, earning attention but not money, so she moved into freelance journalism for magazines and newspapers in Canada and the U.S., and she also found work as a freelance broadcaster for CBC radio. She thoroughly enjoyed all her work in journalism, and she loved Canada, earning dual U.S./Canadian citizenship. During a visit to the Packer Corners commune, in Guilford, she met and fell in love with Marty Jezer, a historian and anti-war activist. They divided their time between Montreal and Guilford, and in September, 1982 Mimi gave birth to their daughter, Kathryn, named for her godmother, Kathryn Kilgore. After 15 years, the partnership of Marty

and Mimi ended, but they remained co-parents and friends. In July, 1998 a mutual friend, Eva Mondon, introduced Mimi to Rick Zamore, a moment that changed both their lives forever. Mimi soon moved to Guilford permanently, and found work teaching English, American Literature, composition, and creative writing at Keene State. Throwing herself into volunteer work, she became president of the Vermont Citizens Campaign for Health, advocating for single-payer health insurance, after being cured of breast cancer free of charge in 1999 by the Canadian health care system. She also served on the boards of the Friends of Music at Guilford, the Guilford Free Library, and the Guilford Historical Society. During the last few years of her life, Mimi spent thousands of hours as a Guardian ad Litem, advocating for children who are under the supervision of the Vermont court system through no fault of their own. She found her GAL work especially meaningful. Mimi completed two books during her final illness. *Before the Age of Reason, a Memoir of Racism*, is available at Everyone's Books in Brattleboro, and a collection of her superb short stories will be available there in February or March. She gained peace and clarity through her practice of Buddhism with her sangas and teachers Mannie Mansbach, Emily Wiandro, and Walter Hagadorn. In addition to her husband Rick, daughter Kathryn, and her stepdaughter Leah Zamore, Mimi is survived by her son-in-law Gray Miles; her two adored grandsons, Jesse and Orion; her brother John, his wife Pat, their daughters Emma Morton and Liz Kollmeyer, and Liz's husband Kip, and their baby, Jack. Mimi was known for her vivid and entertaining personality, her comprehensive memory, and her loving and generous spirit. She was often the funniest and smartest person in the room, and she liked nothing better than sitting at a large table full of friends and family, watching them enjoy some of her unforgettable cooking. She is greatly missed by many people. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service for Mimi is tentatively planned for Memorial Day weekend. Donations to the Guilford Free Library.

• **Mary Catherine O'Rourke, 103**, a longtime resident of Agawam, Mass. and recent resident of the Bradley House in Brattleboro. Died peacefully Jan. 9, 2021, with her daughter and son-in-law at her side. Mrs. O'Rourke was born in Springfield, Mass. on July 19, 1917, the daughter of Joseph and Mary (Daly) Bolger. She was raised and educated in Springfield, where she was a graduate of Classical High School and American International College. She was a member of the Kappa Sigma Sorority. In 1943, she married Joseph P. O'Rourke. Her faithful and devoted husband of 66 years predeceased her in 2009. Mrs. O'Rourke was a teacher at Agawam Junior High and Middle Schools for more than 25 years until her retirement. A devout Catholic and steadfast in her walk of faith, she was long a communicant of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Agawam. She enjoyed taking day trips with her husband, activities with the Agawam Senior Center, visits to the casinos, wintering in Myrtle Beach, S.C., and vacations to the beaches of Florida and Maine. She always had a few books she was reading. She loved her time with family and friends and her independence. She was always eager to shop, to go out to eat, to travel, or attend an event. She always brought a special cheerfulness, appreciation, and a caring concern for how everyone around her was doing. Survivors include: two sons, Thomas O'Rourke (Debbie) of Martinez, Ga., and Joseph O'Rourke (Donna) of Knoxville, Tenn.; her daughter, Patti Chelawski (John) of Guilford; five grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by three brothers, Joseph, Phillip, and Francis Bolger. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Funeral services will be conducted later in the springtime in Agawam, where she will be laid to rest beside her beloved husband in the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Donations to Bradley House, 65 Harris Ave.,

Brattleboro, VT 05301; or The Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St., Agawam, MA 01001. To share a memory or send condolences to the family, visit atamaniuk.com.



• **Brenna (Wrest) Reynolds, 42**, of Burlington. Died on Jan. 1, 2021. Brenna grew up in Beverly, Mass, Essex Junction, and Westford, Vt. She graduated from Essex Junction Educational Center and earned a B.A. degree from Trinity College in Burlington. Brenna had many skills and interests. She had significant intellectual capabilities and was interested in current events, particularly about the inequality of people of color. Her sense of humor was renowned and she had a vast collection of friends. She was generous and kind. Most recently, she found talent in using colored pencils, learning how to draw and creating zentangle designs. She was quite an athlete in her younger years and an avid sports fan. Brenna was supported for many years by medical professionals, organizations, family, and friends as she tried to calm the effects of mental health and addiction issues. Brenna leaves behind her beloved children, Gabriel Reynolds of Claremont, N.H., and William and Mya Smith of Ticonderoga, N.Y., her sister Aurie Mercer of Watervliet, N.Y., her brother Dennis Wrest of Burlington, her mother Lois Reynolds of Brattleboro, and her father Charles Wrest of Watervliet, N.Y. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: The family will have a Celebration of Life service at a later date.



• **Linda Ann Smith, 71**, of Vernon. Died Jan. 7, 2021 at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H., following a brief illness. Linda was born at home in Guilford on April 11, 1949, the daughter of Michael and Eleanor (Battistoni) Zumburski. A lifelong resident of the area, she was raised in Guilford where she attended Guilford schools. She was a graduate of Brattleboro Union High School, Class of 1967. Linda was a long-time employee of Fleming Oil Company, with her last position as manager of Fleming's Lipton Mini Mart in Greenfield, Mass. Previously, she managed Fleming's Shell/Mini Mart in West Brattleboro and, prior to managing the West Brattleboro location, she worked in the business office on Putney Road. She was a member of the B.P.O. Elks Brattleboro Lodge 1499, the Ladies Shrine Club and held membership in American Legion Post 5 in Brattleboro. Linda enjoyed time with her family, summers poolside at her home, and trips to Mohegan Sun. She was well-known as an excellent cook. In 1983, she married Gordon "Smitty" Smith, who predeceased her in 2010. Survivors include a son, James Smith of Austin, Texas; two brothers, George Zumburski of Vernon and Daniel Zumburski of Guilford; a sister, Marjorie Shield and her partner, Richard Gauthier, of West Chesterfield, N.H.; and her beloved grandpups, Bishop and Tuukka. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Funeral services were held Jan. 13 at Mountain View Seventh Day Adventist Church in Vernon, with burial in North Cemetery in Vernon. A Celebration of Life service for the general public will be held in the spring. Donations to the Brattleboro Food Bank, 22 Browne Ct, Unit 108, Brattleboro, VT 05301. To send condolences to the family, visit atamaniuk.com.



• **Curtis Tuff, 82**, of Putney. Died at home, surrounded by family, on Dec. 9, 2020, following a period of declining health. He was born in Macon, Ga., one of 13 children, to Calvin and Minnie (Galloway) Tuff. He was raised and educated in Macon, where he attended elementary and middle school. He worked as a fruit picker for many years, eventually settling in Putney after being hired by William Darrow. Curtis eventually established his own business in Putney, Curtis's All-American Bar-B-Q, which he ran for more than 40 years. It was a well-known landmark, attracting

barbecue fans from around the country. Curtis was simple man of humble beginnings, and was known for his spirit of friendship and generosity. He loved people and through the years he developed a large clientele of customers, many of whom he came to know personally. He was a worldly man in terms of life experiences and knowledge. When not at his barbecue pit, he enjoyed fishing, gardening (of which he had a green thumb), and time shared with his family and many friends. He had a little gambling in his blood and enjoyed trips to the casinos. He was a proud, hard-working man who took pride in being an American and enjoyed following local, regional, and national politics. Being civic-minded, he loved his town of Putney and its residents. In 1983, he married to Christine Goulas, who survives. Besides his faithful and devoted wife of 37 years, he leaves his eight children, Darryl Tuff, Shawn Tuff, Reshea Tuff and Laurel Tuff, all of Clearwater, Fla.; Anne Walker of Georgia, Raechel Bennett of Harmonyville, Christey Tuff of South Carolina, and Sarah Tuff of Brattleboro; 16 grandchildren, four great-grandchildren; and his siblings, Frank Tuff and Minnie Galloway, both of Georgia. Additionally, he is survived by many nieces, nephews, cousins, and a large host of friends. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebration of his life will be held later in the late spring or early summer. Donations to Project Feed the Thousands, P.O. Box 8366, Brattleboro, VT 05304. To share a memory or send condolences to the family, visit atamaniuk.com.



• **Robert Gordon "Bobby" Warwick, 85**, formerly of Brattleboro. Died peacefully at Hollybrook Senior Living in Santa Ana, Calif., where he has been a resident for the last two years. He fought a good battle with bladder cancer for the past year and recently tested positive for COVID-19. He was born in Framingham, Mass., in 1935, the son of the late Mary (Dudley) Warwick and Edward Warwick. He graduated from Brattleboro Union High School in 1954, where he played football and basketball and was active on the Student Council. In 1957, he married Beverly Roberts of Brattleboro, who died in 1993. They met in elementary school and lived in New England until 1972, when they moved to California. He loved to travel and would return to Vermont to visit family and friends, especially around BUHS Alumni Weekend. Other special trips included Hawaii, the national parks, and to visit his daughters and their families. Survivors include four loving daughters, Tari Warwick of Colorado, Traci Johnson of Murphys, Calif., Robyn Hazen of Long Beach, Calif., and Melissa Warwick of Irvine, Calif. He is also survived by a brother, Harold Warwick of Poway, Calif., and two sisters, Virginia Sprague of Brattleboro and Rosemary Smith of Keene, N.H., along with many nieces and nephews. He was a wonderful grandfather to five grandsons, three granddaughters and four great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his brothers, Richard and Ralph Warwick, and his sister Marjorie Bartley. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Bobby was lifelong sports enthusiast, and the family suggests honoring his memory by contributing to a youth sports league, or take a child out and play ball.

• **Joshua Lionel "Josh" Washburn, 40**, of North Walpole, N.H. Died Jan. 7, 2021, after a long battle with polycystic kidney disease. Josh's kidneys may have failed, but his heart never did. He had a huge heart and a hearty laugh. Josh lived to make people laugh and was a good friend to a lot of people. They will remember him most for the goofy smile he almost always wore across his face. Though Josh was playful, always looking for a laugh, he also had a fierce personality that he channeled into his athleticism. He excelled in basketball at Green Mountain Union High School, from which he graduated in 1999. Josh was also unapologetically afraid of the dark. He tried his hand at a number of different careers, including earning a commercial driver's license, that allowed him to see the country from the cab of an 18-wheeler. He leaves behind his longtime partner, Jennifer Merrill, and her son, Isaiah. He is also survived by his mother, Deborah Taylor and her husband, Lawrence, of North Dumpling Island, N.Y., and by his sister, Kayla Brannen and her husband, Barney, of Hanover, N.H. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Josh's family and friends will hold a memorial gathering at a later date. Donations to the National Kidney Foundation at kidney.org.

Milestones are published as community news at no cost to families, thanks to financial support of our members and advertisers. Send them to news@commonsnews.org. Though we ask that content for this column be sent by Friday at 5 p.m., we will do our best to include late obituaries. Please alert the newsroom at 802-246-6397 for post-deadline urgent submissions. We will always do our best to accommodate contributors in their time of grief.



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Hi, my name is **Simba!** I'm a super special and social guy who is in need of a new home that can help continue my training and manners. I spent some time at WCHS but became very stressed out by the kennel environment so for the past month I've been living with a trainer and her family! They've helped me so much as I've learned to be less leash reactive and they taught me all sorts of commands. There are even some nice dogs for me to play with! I do well with other dogs but can be dominant at times so I would probably thrive being the only dog in a home. Cats are still a bit too exciting for me so I would prefer a home without any. I am still working on my anxiety with the help of medication and training but have been improving. Since I'm still young I have lots of energy and would likely benefit from a fenced in yard and routine exercise.



Hi there, I'm **Pepper Jack!** I'm a friendly guy who was brought to WCHS because my owner had too many cats. Since being at WCHS I've been friendly with people I know and I really enjoy playing and interacting with other cats. I should go to a home with an experienced cat owner as I do tend to bite when over-excited. I would likely do well with a feline friend in my home as long as I have time to adjust. Dogs might be scary so any in my home should be cat-savvy and respectful. Because I can be feisty I do need a home with no children.



Hi there, I'm **Muenster!** I'm a sweet and shy guy who is looking for a new home as my previous owner had too many cats to care for. I definitely take awhile to trust people and get settled but once I do I'm a lover! I would likely do best in a quieter home that can give me the time I'll need to get comfortable. I may be able to live with other cats with a proper introduction. Dogs and children would be new and possibly scary for me so everyone should be cat-savvy and respectful. I'm here dreaming of my new home, can it be with you?

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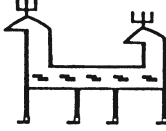
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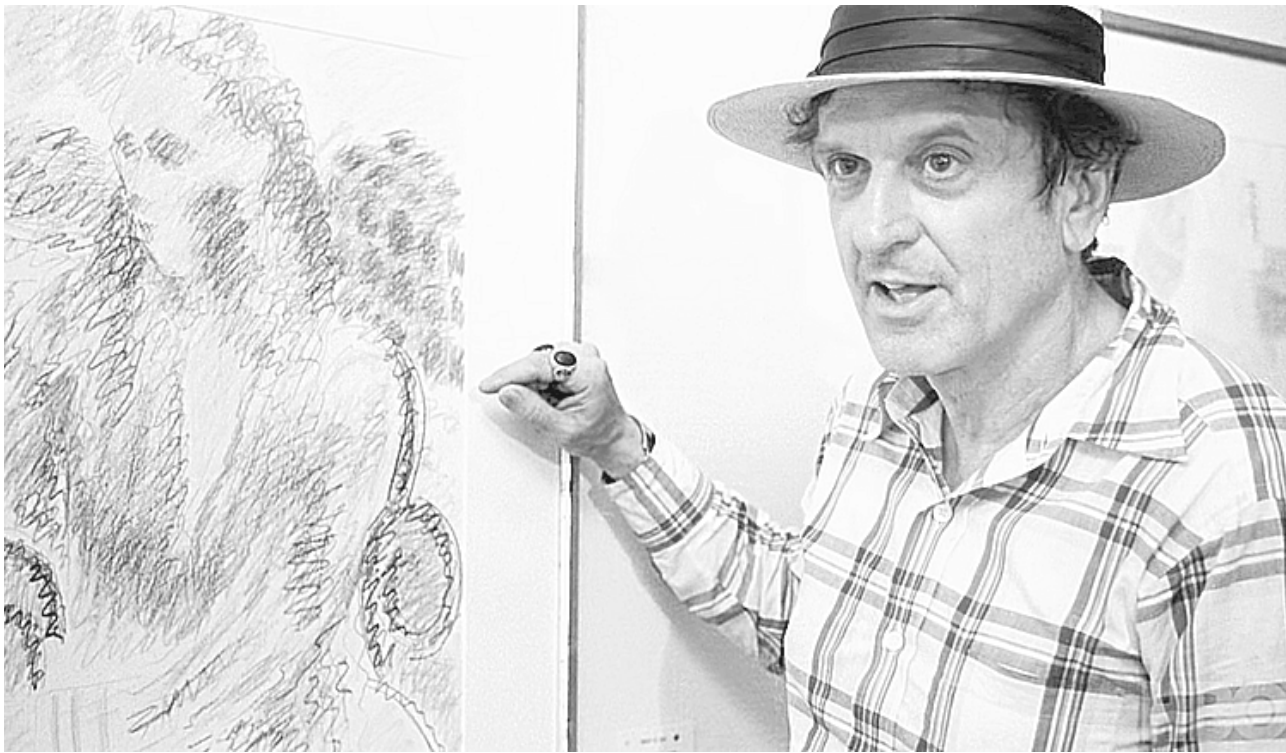
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Robert De Niro Sr. is the subject of an HBO documentary and a BMAC discussion.

BMAC presents online screening of film about artist Robert De Niro Sr.

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) presents a one-time online screening of the HBO documentary *Remembering the Artist: Robert De Niro Sr.* on Thursday, Feb. 4, at 7 p.m.

The 39-minute film is presented in association with the BMAC exhibit “Figuration Never Died: New York Painterly Painting, 1950–1970,” which includes work by De Niro and

nine other painters.

After the film, the exhibit’s curator, Karen Wilkin, will offer insights and take questions from the online audience.

In the film, the late artist’s son, actor Robert De Niro Jr., explores his father’s artistic accomplishments, personal challenges, and relative lack of recognition.

Neil Genzlinger of *The New York Times* notes in his review of

the film that De Niro Sr. “never made it to the pantheon inhabited by Pollock, Rothko, and others who thrived in the middle of the last century.”

The artist’s work is, however, in the collections of numerous museums, including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Denver

Art Museum.

Wilkin is a New York-based curator and art critic and the Atelier Head of Art History at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting & Sculpture, where she teaches in the MFA program.

Register in advance for this free event at brattleboromuseum.org.

VJC concert

Rose Hall, the Cotton Club in Tokyo, and Washington’s Kennedy Center.

COHEN is a young musician (he turned 30 in May), well versed in the vernacular of modern styles. Yet he has been called “an obvious heir apparent to the neo-traditional jazz mantle” by *The New York Times* jazz critic Giovanni Russonello.

On his website, Cohen says in his biography that jazz “is enriched immeasurably by connecting and studying with jazz masters, forging backward to the very creation of the art form.”

Cohen lives by those words. To pay respect to his mentors, he has initiated the Masters Legacy Series (emmetcohen.com/musicvideo), a project that to date has featured four volumes of his trio accompanying great elders still playing the clubs. These jazz legends include Jimmy Cobb, Ron Carter, Benny Golson, Tootie Heath, and George Coleman. Videos of these sessions convey feelings of love, joy and mutual respect.

“Playing with someone like Emmet inspires me,” the nonagenarian Golson told *CityBeat Cincinnati*. “He shows such imagination in his playing and that’s what we need as performers.”

Cohen is eager to collaborate with the 56-year-old Whitfield at the Vermont Jazz Center. He acknowledges Whitfield’s rich and varied experience and defers to his wisdom.

GUITARIST Mark Whitfield is a highly regarded performer with a sound that touches upon both straight-ahead jazz and R&B. As a youth, he was influenced by the warm, soulful stylings of George Benson, whom he later befriended. Benson recommended Whitfield to funky organ titan Brother Jack McDuff, which led to tours and record deals.

Later on, Whitfield joined with another legendary player, Jimmy Smith, thus establishing him as a heavy hitter in the organ trio sub-genre. To date, Whitfield has appeared on more than 200 albums as a sideman and has released a dozen as a leader.

He is the featured guitarist on Christian McBride’s newly released big band album with organist Joey DeFrancesco highlighting the music of Smith and Wes Montgomery.

Whitfield has also performed with Herbie Hancock, Art Blakey, Dizzy Gillespie, Shirley Horn, and Carmen McRae and can be heard on recordings led by Camille Thurman, Warren Wolf, Herlin Riley, Chris Botti, Javon Jackson, James Williams, Juan Carlos Formell, Courtney Pine, Cedar Walton, Ernie Watts, Teodross Avery, Carl Allen, Nicholas Payton, Cleo Laine, Kenny Garrett, and Donald Harrison.

His flexibility and deep, soulful sound have also earned him a place on R&B-influenced albums by Mary J. Blige, and D’Angelo.

THE BASSIST in the Emmet Cohen Trio, Russell Hall, performed at the Vermont Jazz Center with the Christian Sands Trio in February 2017.

Hall, originally from Jamaica, took part in the Essentially Ellington Jazz Competition from 2010 to 2012 and was awarded Most Outstanding Bassist for all three years. He was a member of the 2012 Jazz Band of America and the Vail Jazz Workshop, and he was recognized by Wynton Marsalis as “a jazz star of the future.”

Hall graduated from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Ron Carter.

He has also performed or

recorded with Wynton Marsalis, Branford Marsalis, Aaron Diehl, Wayne Shorter, Roy Haynes, the Heath Brothers, Joshua Redman, Jon Hendricks, Kathleen Battle, Herlin Riley, Cyrus Chestnut, Russell Malone, Jon Batiste and Stay Human, Joey Alexander, Harold Mabern, and many others.

On drums will be Kyle Poole, one of Wynton Marsalis’s “Young Stars of Jazz.” Poole has performed with George Cables, Sullivan Fortner, Jeremy Pelt, Mike LeDonne, Peter Bernstein, Frank Lacy, Stacy Dillard, Joel Frahm, Joel Ross, Giveton Gelin, Mathis Picard, and many others.

FROM SECTION FRONT

He was a semi-finalist in the 2012 Thelonious Monk Institute Competition. His ensemble, Poole and the Gang, features flute virtuosa Elena Pinderhughes.

VJC is grateful for the generosity of dear friend and long-term supporter Diana Bingham, this concert’s sponsor, who is especially fond of encouraging younger musicians to reach for the stars.

Emmet Cohen’s group provides an example of the music she loves — a swinging beat and a repertoire that is both familiar and exciting.

NECCA launches LGBTQ+ scholarships

BRATTLEBORO—With support from the Samara Fund, as well as individual donors, the New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA) has launched three scholarships in support of LGBTQ+ students facing financial difficulty.

According to a news release, the scholarship began as an idea by NECCA Cofounders Elsie Smith and Serenity Smith Forchion in conversation with Scott Heller and Dave King, owners of Frog Meadow Bed & Breakfast in Newfane, “and grew out of an understanding that many applicants to NECCA’s need-based scholarship fund were disproportionately LGBTQ+

identifying.”

NECCA is offering a 50-percent tuition scholarship for one self-identifying LGBTQ+ youth and one LGBTQ+ adult in NECCA’s regular session classes that are open to all level students, as well as \$3,000 of scholarships for aspiring professionals enrolled in the full-time ProTrack performer training program.

“These are often marginalized or at-risk students that are sometimes at an economic disadvantage because of lack of family support,” Smith and Forchion

said.

In spring 2020, NECCA was awarded a grant from the Samara Fund to create the scholarship.

The New England Center for Circus Arts is an internationally recognized circus school. Winter classes begin Jan. 4, including on-line options for at-home fitness and acrobatic training as well as in-person classes in trapeze, tight wire, handstands, trampoline, and more. For more information, visit necenterforcircusarts.org or call 802-254-9780.

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NEYT offers variety of programs for winter, spring seasons

BRATTLEBORO—New England Youth Theatre (NEYT) will offer a variety of fully virtual and in-person programs for its winter and spring programming for 2021.

Youth of all backgrounds and abilities ages 6-19 are encouraged to participate.

NEYT says it “has continued to offer programming to youth

throughout the pandemic, recognizing the mental and social benefits that theater and community provide for young people. All in-person programming follows Vermont and CDC safety guidelines.”

Financial aid is available for students. Visit neyt.org for details and registration information for the nine programs.

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—TERRENCE MANN

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Recent shows Check website for schedule

Brattleboro Literary Festival – Poets in Conversation – Poetry and Social Justice: Mon. 9:00a, Tue. 12:30p, Thu. 6:30a, Fri. 4:00p, Sat. 8:00p, Sun. 5:30p	Brattleboro Selectboard Special Mtg. 1/12/21: Tue. 6:15p (LIVE), Thu. 1:00p, Sat. 5:00a
Brattleboro Democracy Forum – A Re-Conception of Democracy 12/7/20: Tue. 8:00p, Wed. 9:00a, Thu. 4:00p, Sat. 7:30a, Sun. 9:00p	River Valleys Unified School District Bd Mtg. 1/11/21: Wed. 8:30p, Thu. 8:30a, Sat. 2:00p
Here We Are with guest Nancy Heydinger – Girls on the Run, Vermont Founder: Mon. 8:00p, Tue. 6:30a, Wed. 2:00p, Fri. 5:30p, Sat. 7:30p, Sun. 7:00a	Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 1/11/21: Wed. 6:00p, Thu. 6:00a, Sat. 4:30p
Calvary Chapel of the West River Valley – Weekly Service: Tue. 9:00a, Fri. 7:00a, Sun. 10:00a	Putney Selectboard Mtg. 1/13/21: Sat. 8:00p, Sun. 5:00a & 6:00p
Brattleboro Rotary Club Speaker Series – Episode 24 – Dr. Kat McGraw, “COVID-19 Vaccinations”: Tue. 6:30p, Wed. 3:00p, Thu. 9:00a, Fri. 8:00p, Sat. 6:30a, Sun. 3:30p	Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 1/12/21: Fri. 6:00p, Sat. 9:00a, Sun. 12:00p
Brattleboro Literary Festival – In Retrospect with Jill McCorkle and Andre Dubus III: Tue. 3:00p, Thu. 9:30a, Fri. 2:30p, Sat. 5:00a, Sun. 8:00p	Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 1/5/21: Tue. 12:30p, Thu. 9:30p, Sun. 9:15a
Guilford Community Church – Weekly Service: Wed. 6:30a, Sun. 8:00a	Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 1/11/21: Thu. 7:00p, Fri. 6:00a, Sun. 2:30p
First Congregational Church – Weekly Service: Tue. 10:00a, Thu. 3:00p, Sun. 6:00a	Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 1/4/21: Wed. 3:15p, Fri. 11:30a, Sun. 7:30a
The World Fusion Show – EP 92 – Amit Kavthekar: Mon. 8:30p, Tue. 6:00a, Wed. 2:30p, Fri. 11:30a, Sat. 7:00p, Sun. 3:00p	Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell: Mon. 9:00a, Tue. 5:00p, Wed. 12:00p, Thu. 10:30a, Sun. 11:00a
Guilford Community Church – 2020 Guilford Church Christmas Eve Service: Thu. 4:00p, 8:00p & 11:00p	Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg. 1/4/21: Mon. 2:00p, Sat. 10:30p
Brattleboro Words Projects – Community Launch Online Event 12/15/20: Tue. 4:00p, Thu. 8:00p, Fri. 6:00a, Sat. 5:00p, Sun. 12:00p	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 1/13/21: Fri. 8:30p, Sat. 11:30a
Keeping Up with Senior Solutions – Episode 13 – Mark Boutwell: Mon. 12:05p, Wed. 6:05p, Fri. 5:00a, Sat. 1:35p	Windham Southeast School District Bd Mtg. 1/5/21: Wed. 8:00a, Fri. 1:15p, Sun. 8:30p
St. Michael’s Catholic Church Mass: Sun. 2:00p & 7:00p, Tue. 7:00a & 2:00p	West River Education District Bd Mtg. 12/21/20: Mon. 5:15a, Tue. 10:15p
Brattleboro Music Center presents – The EOS Project Concert 11/8/20: Mon. 6:00a, Tue. 9:40p, Wed. 12:05p, Sat. 9:00a	The David Pakman Show: Mon. 8:00a, Tue. 9:00a, Wed. 5:00p, Fri. 10:30a, Sun. 5:00p
Rotary Cares – Ep 31 – Venu Rao and Lawrence Penna: Mon. 10:30a, Tue. 9:05p, Thu. 5:00a, Sat. 1:00p, Sun. 4:00p	Putney Selectboard Budget Mtg. 1/6/21: Tue. 6:00a & 2:15p, Wed. 5:15a
Call to Action COVID-19 – Women’s Freedom Center: Tue. 11:00a, Wed. 12:0p, Thu. 6:05p, Sat. 5:50a, Sun. 4:45p	Brattleboro Community Safety Review Committee Mtg. 12/28/20: Mon. 10:00a, Wed. 1:00p

Note: Schedule subject to change.

View full schedule and watch online at **brattleborotv.org**

BCTV’s Program Highlights are sponsored by The Commons. BCTV’s municipal meeting coverage helps Commons reporters stay in touch. Read about it in the Town & Village section at www.commonnews.org.

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THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	
21 Local history Rudyard Kipling's Life in Vermont - Preceded by Business Meeting (via Zoom): Today's program features Chuck Fish who will speak about Kipling's four years in VT: Why he came, why he left, what he thought of Vermonter, and how his deepest political instincts clashed with American convictions. Although refreshments are typically served, you'll have to provide your own this time. ▶ 7 p.m. Brief business meeting followed by Kipling presentation. ▶ Free. ▶ Zoom. Information: For Zoom link, email: gailsylv@gmail. Kids and families BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Dept. - Parent/Tot Open Gym: Open Gym is an unstructured program for parents and preschoolers ages five and under. This is a place for parents and tots to get out of the cold and enjoy playing with playhouses, cars, toys, tunnel, a play kitchen, big rubber balls, and more. Parent is responsible for their child(ren). ▶ 10-11:30 a.m. Mondays and Thursdays. Masks are mandatory and temperatures are taken on arrival. Everyone must sign in daily. Everyone must complete a registration form and COVID-19 Release waiver. Anyone 18 years old or younger must have a parent sign both documents (found online at brattleboro.org). Note: If you're not a VT resident and wish to participate, you must reside in a green county according to the State of VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development Cross State Travel Information map: https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel-and-isolated-weekly. This may mean that you will not be able to participate weekly based on your county's color if you reside in a state other than VT. ▶ Through Thursday, April 22. ▶ \$1.00 per child per day. ▶ Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Dept., 207 Main St. Information: 802-254-5808; brattleboro.org. BRATTLEBORO Fencing (ages 7-12): Intro to Western Martial Arts and forms of combat pursued and developed in Medieval Europe. Students will learn the basics of combat, self-defense, history of swordplay in medieval society. Led by Reilly Shumpton. Bring comfortable, clean soled shoes, and prepare to lunge into action! ▶ 5-6 p.m. Thursdays. For programs, events, facility info, online fillable registration form and more visit www.brattleboro.org. Hover over the "Sport and Recreation" tab on blue horizontal bar. A drop-down menu will appear - click "Recreation and Parks." Masks required. Temperature taken daily. If you're not a VT resident, to participate, you must reside in a "green county" - Map updated weekly: https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel. ▶ Through Thursday, February 25. ▶ \$85 Brattleboro residents, \$100 non-residents (plus \$50 refundable equipment deposit). ▶ Gibson-Aiken Center, 207 Main St. Information: 802-254-5808 (Gibson Aiken office). Community building BRATTLEBORO Celebrating Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day at the Brattleboro Food Co-op: "For the last four years, the BFC has welcomed organizations from our community into the store on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This year, instead, we're dedicating all our social media presence to MLK Day for an entire week (started 1/18). We're featuring one of seven organizations each day with a short video and other informative posts."	22 "We hope you'll tune in, donate some money, and perhaps some time, too - our Commitment to Community program allows our Shareholders to receive work credit towards their Working Shareholder discount through volunteering at community organizations." ▶ Through Sunday, January 24. ▶ Brattleboro Food Co-op, 2 Main St. Check out these wonderful, local non-profits all week on our social media handles: @BrattleboroFoodCoop on Facebook and Instagram. How to Buy an EV or Hybrid Car (Online): Have you been considering an electric or hybrid vehicle but feel that it's out of your price range? Learn about the advantages of hybrids and EV cars and how you can save money in the long run by driving one. VT has numerous incentives for every budget. Presented by Samantha Hurt, Program Mgr. at Capstone Community Action, Inc. and David Roberts, Drive Electric VT Coordinator. ▶ 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. ▶ Free. ▶ Online. Information: Register: mileagemart.eventbrite.com. Statewide LGBTQ+ Town Hall Series (Online): Join us for weekly Town Hall Sessions on Health Justice, Housing, Rural Queensness, Youth, Aging, and Racial Justice. We'll be culminating the series with a Statewide LGBTQ+ Town Meeting. Share what is important to you and explore ways we can build together across the state. ▶ 7 p.m. on Tuesdays. This is a collaborative project series offered by the LGBTQIA+ Alliance of VT, Outright Vermont, Pride Center of VT, and the Rainbow Umbrella of Central VT. ▶ Through Tuesday, March 2. ▶ Online. Information: Register: pridetv.com. VT Arts Council and the VT Recreation & Parks Association: Ongoing Challenges created by Covid-19 (via Zoom): This meeting brings together artists and performers from around VT. ▶ 10-11 a.m. Meeting Agenda: Intros: VT Arts Council; VRPA; VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD); VT Forests, Parks & Rec.; artist reps. Overview of the idea of Safe Outdoor Venues for Arts during spring/summer/fall 2021 seasons. Successful outdoor arts events that happened in 2020. Discussion/overview of 2020 outdoor event guidelines and regulations and anticipated spring/summer 2021 guidelines. Overview of "Creative Ground" directory for artists. Open discussion: What do artists/performers need to connect with the public in 2021? Examples of workable solutions in 2020 that could be tried in more places in 2021? Potential venues artists been talking to. Future meeting with community leaders & artists. Next steps/action items. ▶ Free. ▶ Zoom. Information: Register: vrpa.org/event-4126666. Community meals MARLBORO Marlboro Community Food Share: Fill a grocery bag with non-perishables and fresh local produce. No registration or eligibility needed. This weekly opportunity is available to anyone who could use an extra bag of groceries or knows someone who does. Food will be set up in the entry-way to the Center. For proper social distancing, enter one person at a time. Bring a grocery bag or use ours. Masks required. ▶ 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. in the entry-way on Thursdays. Deliveries will be made through Marlboro Cares for those needing assistance (call 802-258-3030 in advance). Non-perishable food donations should be left at the donation box at the Marlboro Post Office. Gardeners and farmers are welcome to donate produce. Wear masks and wash hands when harvesting and handling food. Fresh produce can be dropped off at the Community Center on Thurs. between 1 and 4 p.m. Leftover produce will be taken to FoodWorks the next morning. ▶ Free. ▶ Marlboro Community Center, 524 South Rd. Information: laurenolitskiposter@gmail.com. GUILFORD Guilford Cares Food Pantry: Guilford Cares Food Pantry continues to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic.	23 They are well stocked with the staples you need for your family and are following viral guidelines to limit risk. Anyone in need of supplemental food for themselves or their families is welcome. ▶ 5 - 6 p.m. on Thursdays. Remain in your car. A volunteer will give you a "shopping list" (fresh produce, staples, meat, dairy) for you to mark items you would like (bring a pen). Another volunteer will fill a bag (bring one) and bring it to porch where you will pick it up. Questions, comments, donate groceries/monetary gifts, call Pat Haine: 802-257-0626. If you cannot come due to illness/high risk, call Pat to arrange for food delivery by a volunteer. ▶ Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: More questions/info: 802-579-1350, guilfordcaresvt@gmail.com. Visual arts and shows BRATTLEBORO "Precarious Shelters: Houses that Hold Us" (Jackie Abrams) and "Deportees: A Tribute" (Erika Radich): Abrams' ongoing project is designed to raise awareness of the extreme range of homes/shelters worldwide and in our own communities. It speaks to connections between race, class, gender, poverty, and asks us to recognize the need for mutual learning, support, social change. Radich offers 28 monotype collages addressing social justice, equality, human dignity. "In 1948, 28 Mexican farmworkers died in a plane crash in California. This may become 'personal' to each viewer." ▶ Exhibits available for viewing in person and online: https://mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com/current-exhibits. ▶ Through Sunday, February 21. ▶ Free. ▶ Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts, 183 Main St. Information: 802-251-8290; mitchellgiddingsfinearts.com. Tintype Photography Demonstration (Zoom and Facebook Live): Photographer Rachel Portesi demos the process she used to create tintype photos in the exhibit "Hair Portraits." Each is the result of a 26-second exposure directly onto a thin sheet of metal painted black, then coated in emulsion to make it light-sensitive. The plate is immediately developed and placed in fixer, where the image appears. This archaic way of making "instant pictures" appealed to her after years of shooting Polaroids, until the film became unavailable. ▶ 7 p.m. Demo followed by a Q&A. A recording will be available afterwards. Offered by the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center. ▶ Free. ▶ Online. Information: Register: us02web.zoom.us/join/register?w_XN_xEHwtUDn596AMKIubZeg. Ideas and education Documentary: "Ernie & Joe: Crisis Cops" (Virtual): Intimate portrait of two officers from San Antonio's Police Dept.'s 2019 Mental Health Unit who are helping to change the way police respond to mental health calls. Panel discussion with: a Bennington police officer, Mobile Crisis Clinician from United Counseling Services, and a person with lived experience follow the screening. ▶ 6 - 7:30 p.m. (25 min. screening excerpt followed panel discussion and Q&A). Access to the full-length documentary available after the event. Co-sponsored by NAMI Vermont, Team Two Vermont, Vermont Criminal Justice Council-Vermont Police Academy, United Counseling Services. ▶ Free. ▶ Online. Information: Register/learn more namivt.org/ernie-joe. Film and video "Hollywood Architect: The Paul R. Williams Story" (Virtual): Nicknamed "Architect to the Stars," African American architect Paul R. Williams was one of the most successful architects of his time. But at the height of his career he wasn't always welcome in the buildings he designed because of his race. "Hollywood's Architect" tells the story of how he used talent, determination, and charm to defy the odds and create a celebrated body of work. ▶ This film, 56 min. in length, is offered to the public thanks to 118 Elliot's partnership with the VT chapter of the American Institute of Architects and Burlington City Arts. More film info: https://hollywoodarchitect.org. ▶ Through Sunday, January 24. ▶ Free. ▶ Virtual. Information: Screening link and password: Adfilmseries.org.	24 Music The Emmet Cohen Trio with special guest Mark Whitfield (Livestream): The Vermont Jazz Center presents this concert with pianist Emmet Cohen, his working trio, and special guest guitarist Mark Whitfield. A concert with Cohen and Whitfield promises to be swinging, funky and soulful, with reverence for the tradition and an eye toward the future. ▶ 8 p.m. ▶ By donation. ▶ Livestream. Information: facebook.com/VermontJazzCenter/Live. GRAFTON Kevin Parry - Guitar and Vocals ▶ 5:30 - 8 p.m. You must have reservations and wear a mask. (Parry's website is www.kevinparrymusic.com.). ▶ Free. ▶ Grafton Inn, 92 Main St. Information: 802-843-2231; graftoninnvermont.com. Kids and families "Mini Upcycled Ice Shanties" (via Zoom): Children and families use repurposed and recycled materials to create their own mini ice shanties. Instructor Ross Smart will share examples of up-cycled shanties and discuss what makes an ice shanty an ice shanty. After a week of working on their creations, participants reconvene to share what they have created and discuss using unconventional materials creatively. ▶ 10 a.m. Recommended for ages 8-12. Children should be supervised when using a hot glue gun. Participants will be sent (or can pick up at BMAC) a packet of materials: hot glue gun, paint, decorative flourishes for their ice shanty creations. We encourage finding materials to use	25 around the home, such as bottle caps, jar lids, acorn tops, pine cones. Families will need to find their own boxes - shoe box, tissue box, old jewelry box, etc. This 2-part workshop continues Jan. 30 at 10 a.m. Offered by the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center in connection with the inaugural "Artful Ice Shanties Design-Build Competition"; two current BMAC exhibits about ice fishing, Ice Shanties: Fishing, People & Culture and Erik Hoffner: "Ice Visions"; and the BMAC exhibit "Overboard," in which Andy Yoder transforms recycled materials into Air Jordan sneakers. ▶ \$20. ▶ Zoom. Registration required: brattleboromuseum.wufoo.com/forms/workshop-mini-upcycled-ice-shanties. Well-being "Food Choices: Sugar" (via Zoom): Today's class focuses on the history of cane



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ESSAY

The world needs my generation’s tender toughness

I don’t want to see America on the side of a milk carton. I don’t know what will save us, but I’m looking to the kids of the ’80s and ’90s to lead the way.

Brattleboro

I WAS BORN in 1979 and therefore consider myself a Double Stuf Oreo of generational influences. I have the unique perspective of having all of my formative years wedged between banana clips and Nirvana.

If my inner child took visible shape, she’d be smoking a clove cigarette while watching *Punky Brewster* — the show about a single, white man in his 50s who somehow manages to adopt a runaway child after hiding her in his apartment for several days.

Children of my particular era have a very unique sense of dread that informs their humor. My children don’t think most of my jokes are funny, but I remind them that they can pour

BETHANY KRIGER THIES is a published author and coordinates the scholarship process for Putney Student Travel. She serves as the director of program development for *Everywhere Philosophy*, an organization that brings the tools of academic philosophy into interactive public and virtual spaces. Her four children are unimpressed.

milk into their cereal without staring at the poster of a missing child.

And that when they turn on Netflix, they do not hear a man with an ominous voice that stretches out of the television like an entire

package of Big League Chew saying, “It’s 10 p.m. Do you know where your children are?”

THERE’S NO WAY to properly explain the dichotomy of the terrors of our microgeneration’s upbringing with the genuine disinterest most adults had in explaining any of it to you.

Most of the time, you *were* actually at home, your fingers cramped from a day of hard work, urgently hovering over Play and Record trying to miss the radio DJs voice but not the first few bars of Richard Marx’s “Right Here Waiting.”

Your parents didn’t always know when you walked through the door, and they probably didn’t care all that much. I wonder if that ritualistic, ominous reminder coming from the

television was their cue to throw a bag of pretzels at your door. (“Dinner!”)

We lived through the Reagan war on drugs, divorce rates on steroids, the AIDS epidemic, and *Unsolved Mysteries*. Billy Joel just decided to stop writing a very lengthy song about the tragedies of human existence when he got to our generation because he literally said, “I can’t take it anymore.”

We broke Billy Joel.

But instead of being broken ourselves, we developed this kind of tender toughness. We were independent, smart, and imaginative, but we also avoided hard emotions like a game of sixth-grade dodgeball.

■ SEE TENDER TOUGHNESS, C2

VIEWPOINT



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Words have CONSEQUENCES

We must call the chaos on Capitol Hill an attempted coup, an insurrection, and domestic terrorism. We must also recognize President Trump for what he is: a stochastic terrorist.

Washington, D.C.

TERRORISM TAKES many forms — from violent high-profile attacks to sophisticated cyber-intrusions. Yet there is another, more insidious form of terrorism — one practiced by President Trump that was on full display on Jan. 6 on Capitol Hill. It is called stochastic terrorism.

Stochastic terrorism is a process in which a speaker makes comments that promote terrorism without explicitly asking people to engage in violence.

By keeping their statements implicit, stochastic terrorists maintain plausible deniability if violence actually occurs.

For example, in spring of last year, Trump tweeted “LIBERATE MICHIGAN!” in response to Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s orders to slow the spread of coronavirus. She was later targeted for kidnapping by violent right-wingers whose motivations echoed Trump’s Twitter tirade.

When confronted with the possibility that he may bear some responsibility for their action, Trump only complained that

KURT BRADDOCK PH.D. is assistant professor of public communication in the School of Communication at American University in Washington, D.C., where he serves as a faculty fellow at the university’s Polarization and Extremism Research Innovation Lab (PERIL). Braddock served as a source for The Commons’ recent coverage about the antifa movement in the region.

Whitmer did not thank him for the FBI’s arrest of the extremists.

DESPITE EVENTS like this, Republicans have long balked at reckoning with the effects of Trump’s language, hesitant to hold him accountable and content to assume that implicit support for violence could never result in actual bloodshed.

When he celebrated a Republican congressman attacking a reporter, his crowd cheered. When he called neo-Nazis “very fine people,” the racist elements of his supporters were emboldened. And most

recently, when he encouraged “wild” protests in Washington on the day that electoral votes were to be certified, his supporters listened.

In the wake of the 2020 Presidential election, as Trump intensified his lies about fraud, one anonymous Republican even asked, “What’s the downside in humoring him for this little bit of time?”

For that anonymous source and all those who remained silent, the disgrace in Washington during the week of Jan. 6 provides an answer.

As a professor of communication, my teaching and research is based on a fact that has been clear since the days of Socrates — words have consequences.

Trump has spent the better part of his presidential tenure using words that chastise, demonize, ridicule, accuse, and dehumanize his political adversaries. He has also used words to whine, bellyache, gripe, and complain about alleged “unfair” treatment that he has endured.

And while it is easy to dismiss his braying as harmless, decades of research show

■ SEE STOCHASTIC TERRORISM, C4

LETTERS FROM READERS

Black Lives Matter protests not equivalent to Capitol insurrection

Perhaps the most appalling defense mounted by members of the GOP for the fallen Donald Trump was that the violence at the U.S. Capitol was somehow equivalent — or even less serious — than the protests for civil rights that occurred throughout the summer in the cause of Black Lives Matter.

Let me clarify.

The marches and protests that followed the extralegal lynching of George Floyd and the utterly incompetent raid that resulted in the murder by police of Breonna Taylor were actual heartbreaking injustices. They were crimes that stand in a long and continuing line of brutality by police towards African Americans.

Racist violence is real, and the list of unarmed and non-threatening Black citizens who have been killed and gunned down with impunity continues to grow.

Now let us look at the so-called injustice that inspired a mob to assault the U.S. Capitol and halt the work of our legislators and even threaten their lives.

This “injustice” was a fantasy, a lie, and a repulsive self-serving fraud perpetrated by a broken man in the White House. The “steal” of this election did not happen.

So how do we equate these two? We do so by saying the injustices born by Black Americans must be fake and overblown. At the same time, the completely made-up injustices felt by a white cop-killing mob are a holy crusade.

This equation is an abomination.

If you cannot see the racist underpinnings of this utterly false equivalency, then you need to look around, get educated, and stop believing whatever self-serving fake conspiracy has taken hold of your brain and your soul.

Yes, violence is not the way. I condemn it, as do all reasonable people.

But think for a moment and ask yourself, “What is the root cause of this anger? Is it real injustice, or is it a made-up conspiracy based upon lies?”

I think you know the answer.

Andy Davis
Brattleboro

like wearing masks and avoiding crowds.

When I was 11 years old and walked to school every day with my brother, we would go a long way out of our way to avoid the crossing guards, who would tell us when it was safe to cross the street.

“This is a free country,” we’d shout. “No one can tell me when to cross the street.”

But I grew up.

With age, I realized that the direction of the crossing guards, like speed limits and stop signs and anti-COVID masks, was designed to protect me. Various regulations might be annoying, but overall, they are designed to protect us all. Refusing to follow such regulations or suggestions is childish.

The so-called “patriots” (it’s not clear to me why some people think that trashing the Capitol is patriotic) have yet to grow up, if they ever will. They’re acting like children. They’re throwing tantrums. They’re seeking attention and taking selfies.

Real adults don’t exhibit such behaviors. Real adults use reason instead of lying on the floor kicking and screaming. Real adults learn to argue instead of smashing windows.

If people want to be taken seriously, they have to stop acting like 11-year-old children.

People, grow up!

Gretchen Becker
Halifax

Dangerous elements on both sides of the political spectrum

I have heard the outrage about the march on the Capitol in Washington, D.C. I have heard lawmakers were afraid for their lives.

I am betting that regular civilians trying to live their lives in Minneapolis, Seattle, Portland, Kenosha, and other cities felt that exact same fear when violent protesters set fires, destroyed businesses, and viciously attacked the police. They marched under different banners, but their results were the same: Fear and danger to everyone.

We were horrified that anyone broke into the Capitol and should have been equally horrified when protesters attacked federal courthouses and tried to kill the federal law enforcement officers sent there to protect those buildings. Failure to act emboldened violent people of all political affiliations. They believe if they are upset about anything, violence is an appropriate response that will go unchecked.

When do we agree there are dangerous elements on both

■ SEE LETTERS, C2



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Due to the pandemic, the
Municipal Center is closed to

RFPL hosts discussion about flash flooding

Organizers of the program recommend viewing the documentary film *Flood Bound: The Uplifting Story of Pittsfield, Vt.*, available to stream anytime from the library's website (bit.ly/596-flood).

To receive an invitation to join the discussion, email **programming@rockinghamlibrary.org** or call the library at 802-463-4270. Be sure to leave your phone number and email address.



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Rec. Dept. offers youth chess classes

p.m.; these players must know basic checkmate and a few tactics and strategies. Advanced classes will run on Fridays from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., and players must have completed the intermediate level. Eric Strickland is the instructor.

Registration may be completed in person by appointment at the Recreation & Parks Office at the Gibson-Aiken Center, 207 Main St. To make arrangements, call

**Putney monthly free
produce distribution
is Jan. 28**

PUTNEY — The Vermont Foodbank and the Putney Foodshelf co-sponsor a monthly food drop of free produce and some non-perishables on the fourth Thursday of every month, from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m. at Putney

Community-based garden organizing training begins soon

Join the Vermont Community
Garden Network in February
(Thursdays, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.)

Course fees, schedules, and other details can be found at vcgn.org/what-we-do/growit. Register by Jan. 26.

BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

"Beast Mode"

Across

1. Bazooka alternative
9. Parody
15. Lady at a ball
20. Hotel fee
21. '60s dance
22. "The Grapes of Wrath" folks
23. Comparatively merino-hued?
25. Doesn't buy
26. Recently out
27. Affirmative vote
28. Seat cover
30. Go kaput
31. With, in Wiesbaden
32. George of "CSI"
35. Breakfast meat that tastes like a wild cat?
40. "What a day!"
41. You'd better believe it
43. Pres. after USG
44. Significant stretch
45. O'Hare airport code
46. Bra part
47. Future farmers
50. "The Michelle __ Podcast"
54. Jungle monarch waiting to attack?
57. Colombian cowboys
59. Actor McGregor
60. Henri's buddy
61. "Fast & Furious" director Justin
62. Jacob's third son
63. Tanglewood grp.
65. Building toy brand
66. Sportscaster Jim
68. "Earth to __" (late night Disney+ show)
69. How a neigh is said?
73. Bunny on the Bruins?
75. Schooner drink
76. Goes bad
77. Eeler's tools
79. Wee, to Burns
79. Belly button gunk
81. Trail behind
82. Gives the nod
83. "Trinity" author
86. Hype too much
88. Alanis Morissette song about a river mammal?
93. "That show's great!"
94. "R-E-L-A-X"
96. Called up
97. "Keep it to yourself!"
98. Shark tank?
100. Congresswoman in the Squad, initially
101. Thicket
103. Poetic night
104. Busted ground squirrel?
109. Totally against
110. Star rep: Abbr.
111. Israeli weapon
112. Pro-pupil org.
113. Cut (off)
115. Brown fur
118. Finish a crossword, e.g.
120. Monkey's heartthrob?
126. Contemptuous look
127. Sidestepped
128. Some toothpastes
129. Approving words
130. Run-down cars
131. Most saccharine

Down

1. "The Plague" setting
2. Actress DeWitt

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10. Relieves
11. Highest degree
12. Directly
13. Bring into play
14. Kate Middleton's sis
15. Lie next to
16. Make do, with "out"
17. Jitterbug variant
18. Admit
19. English earldom
24. Mouth off to
29. Bio bit
33. General feeling
34. Carpe __
36. "Why! Why! Why!"
37. Latin "where"
38. Beats badly
39. Categorize
40. Tiny particle: Abbr.
41. Matching linen pair
42. Fort Wayne's river
48. Seventh row Battleship guess
49. Go furtively
51. Team building?
52. Van proprietor
53. Parenthetical comment
55. Collars
56. Judges' seats
58. Pays to play
64. Fertilization site
65. Whence "come full circle"
66. "Uh-uh!"
67. Brewer's science
69. Angelic signs
70. Green hue
71. Montagne of NPR
72. Toothbrush brand
73. Nonsense statements
74. "Listen!"
77. Betting group
80. Wrestler __ Stratus
84. Blend together

85. Now and then
87. Tea prep tools
88. Vomit
89. Techy suffix
90. Diplomat's asset
91. Fan the flames of
92. Take first
95. Murmuring sound
99. Dance, e.g.
102. Spanish appetizer
104. Dress (up)
105. O3
106. Loads and loads

107. Boiled bread
108. Actress Pompeo
110. Troubled
114. The "O" in "REO"
116. Push for
117. Secy.
119. Vault entrance?
121. Real Madrid cheer
122. Daiquiri ingredient
123. Confirmation phrase
124. Rap battle battlers
125. "That's gonna leave a mark!"

Last issue's solution

"7 x 3"

3. Projecting glass feature
4. Paintballer's cry
5. "Divergent" hero
6. Amass, as a group
7. Versatile family car
8. "Make __ drink!"
9. Influence

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

‘I am here’

A new legislator reflects on two days of mission and meaning

Rockingham
JAN. 6 AND 7, 2021 have been memorable days. Wednesday morning started with the convening of the 2021–22 biennium of the Vermont State Legislature. The first action was a roll call by the secretary of state, Jim Condos. Each member was required to acknowledge their presence. I was asked to say, “This is Leslie

LESLIE GOLDMAN (goldman@leg.state.vt.us) is an incoming representative, one of two representing Athens, Brookline, Grafton, Rockingham, Windham, and a slice of Westminster.

Goldman, and I am here.” These words were more moving than I expected. Reflecting on the meaning of “I am here” led me to realize

that “I am here” with my colleagues to serve the people of Vermont. “I am here” means I am present in this moment with awareness of the needs of those in Windham-3, as well as the needs of our environment and of our world. There was a real sense of responsibility and awe in those three words.

We then nominated and elected our new speaker of the house, Rep. Jill Krowinski of Burlington, who spoke eloquently on the need to “chart a course that leaves no Vermonter behind.” This very important aspiration was an inspiring way to begin our work. Next item on the agenda was the oath of office. Once again, I had no idea I would be so moved by reciting this oath — in fact, I became tearful. Making a commitment to uphold the constitutions of Vermont and of the United States is so important



LESLIEGOLDMANVT.ORG

Incoming Windham-3 Rep. Leslie Goldman takes the oath of office via Zoom.

—shockingly evident to me in contrast to the backdrop of all that has happened in the last four years with the members of our federal government who clearly have not lived up to their oaths. Committee assignments were then announced. Most of our work as representatives is done in our committees where we delve deeply into issues and create legislation to solve problems. I have been assigned to the Health Care Committee, which makes sense given my background as a family nurse practitioner for 37 years. I am very excited to be working on health care topics, and I’m very interested to hear about your experience of health care, especially in the time of COVID-19.

so glad to see that our institutions held, that the insurrection was rebuffed, and that the election was certified. Gov. Phil Scott made a powerful statement calling for the president’s resignation or removal from office, and on Thursday, Jan. 7, the Vermont House and Senate supported him in a joint resolution condemning his actions. It was an honor and a privilege to add my name to that legislative measure. The full work at the House starts the week of Jan. 12. Of course, we are on Zoom, which has its own unique set of challenges. But I believe we are beginning to move through these dark times. We have cared for each other and have learned a lot about what really matters. I know we will take these lessons into the future as we aim to “leave no Vermonter behind.”



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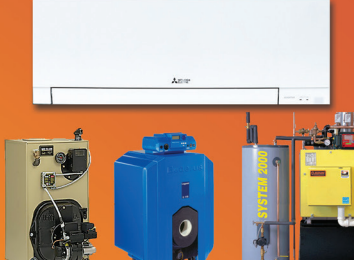
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Stochastic terrorism

FROM SECTION FRONT

us that audiences make decisions based on the messages they encounter. Messages we consume affect our attitudes about whether a behavior would

benefit us, change our understanding about what is “normal” behavior, and persuade us that we have the ability to engage in that behavior. In online right-wing echo chambers, Trump’s baseless claims have reinforced the notion that the election was stolen and that those who think otherwise are enemies of the United States. By surrounding themselves with like-minded people in these electronic echo chambers, vulnerable audiences come to believe that the president’s statements represent a normal way of thinking. Trump’s encouragement of action on the part of his base boosts their beliefs that they can change the election’s results. Using a steady stream of implicitly violent statements and disinformation targeting political enemies, Trump has nurtured an audience whose shameful behavior we witnessed in Washington.

TO PREVENT these kinds of events, we must call the chaos on Capitol Hill what it was — an attempted coup, an insurrection and, according to the FBI’s definition, domestic terrorism. In doing so, we must also recognize President Trump for what he is — a stochastic terrorist. Even as the newly minted domestic terrorists paraded Confederate flags and Trump banners through the halls of Congress, President Trump released a video statement, repeating his lies about a stolen election, expressing sympathy with his supporters’ feelings, and halfheartedly telling them to go home. In what should have been an unmistakable rebuke of the day’s violence, Trump reinforced the very ideas that instigated the mayhem. It was yet another provision of implicit encouragement for those who engaged in political violence in support of his lies. “We love you,” he told them. “You’re very special people.”

By 1 A.M., the streets surrounding the Capitol had quieted and Congress had officially certified the election of Joe Biden, but the effects of Trump’s words continued to be uncovered throughout the night. A truck was discovered to contain several guns and bomb-making materials. Pipe bombs were found outside the headquarters of the Democratic and Republican National Committees. And the electronic echo chambers continued to whirl, encouraged by a President, a stochastic terrorist, who is happy to offer tacit support for the damage his violent supporters have done — and may yet do — to our republic.